

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1003

By Todd

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Jerry Lee Lewis upon being named an American Music Master.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those noteworthy Tennesseans who, through their extraordinary musical talents, have earned the universal respect of their peers and fans; and

WHEREAS, throughout its illustrious history, Tennessee has been blessed with many exemplary citizens who have made significant contributions to the field of popular music; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding musician who has become a permanent fixture of American music, is Mr. Jerry Lee Lewis; and

WHEREAS, his countless contributions were deservedly recognized on November 10, 2007, when he was named by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and Case Western Reserve University as an "American Music Master"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lewis holds the singular distinction of being the first-ever living recipient of the honor whose past recipients include two of his personal heroes, Jimmie Rodgers and Hank Williams, Sr., and; and

WHEREAS, held in Cleveland, Ohio, Mr. Lewis's life-long musical achievements were celebrated with a symposium and a week of festivities titled, "Whole Lot of Shakin': The Life and Music of Jerry Lee Lewis," that culminated in a three-hour tribute concert at the Playhouse Square's State Theatre; and

WHEREAS, led by the master of ceremonies, Kris Kristofferson, the magical evening began with a contingent of Jerry Lee Lewis's former Sun Records colleagues who performed some of Mr. Lewis's most popular songs; the outstanding Sun Records performers included, Billy Lee Riley, who performed *Great Balls of Fire*, a song Mr. Riley played guitar on; Sun

Records engineer, “Cowboy” Jack Clement; and early Sun Records artist, Narvel Felts, who sang his hit song, *Cry*, a Lewis favorite; and

WHEREAS, in between acts, a big screen projected highlights of Jerry Lee Lewis’s career; one particularly popular moment was Mr. Lewis’s famous career-making 1957 appearance on *The Steve Allen Show*, when he performed a rousing rendition of his renowned hit song, *Whole Lot of Shakin’ Going On*; and

WHEREAS, the captivating night continued with performances of Jerry Lee Lewis’s well-known tunes by such noteworthy artists as country-soul diva, Shelby Lynne, roots guitar ace, Sleepy LaBeef, gospel singer, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and bluegrass artist, Del McCoury, all of whom also peppered their performances with anecdotes and reminiscences about Mr. Lewis; and

WHEREAS, the history-making concert was a family affair as well, featuring an appearance of the Lewis 3, a group comprised of Jerry Lee Lewis’s sister, Linda Gail, and her daughters, Annie Marie Dolan and Mary Jean McCall; the family trio sang a spirited version of *Good Golly Miss Molly* that invigorated the crowd; and

WHEREAS, one especially memorable appearance was that of Mr. Lewis’s first cousin, Reverend Jimmy Swaggart, who sang a gorgeous version of *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* and delivered a moving oratory on the long and close bond the two men have shared since childhood, learning to play on the same piano; and

WHEREAS, the parade of special guests ended with rock group, The Pretenders, whose front woman, Chrissie Hynde, ended her appearance with a frolicsome *Whole Lot of Shakin’ Going On*; and

WHEREAS, the tribute ended with the renowned Jerry Lee Lewis accepting the statuette honoring him as the 2007 “American Music Master”; Mr. Lewis then took his natural place at the piano and played an inspiring version of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, with all of the night’s performers gathered around him; and

WHEREAS, as the curtain came down and the crowd exited the venue, the big screen flashed a film clip of the legendary singer sitting in Sun studios in Memphis and prophetically

proclaiming, "There are only four original stylists in the history of American music: Al Johnson, Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams...and Jerry Lee Lewis."; and

WHEREAS, Jerry Lee Lewis epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lewis's widespread musical influence is unparalleled, and he most certainly lives up to the title of American Music Master in every sense of the phrase; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Jerry Lee Lewis for his incomparable service as a great American music master and producing exceptional music in this state; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Mr. Jerry Lee Lewis upon being named a 2007 "American Music Master," commend his peerless contributions to American popular music and culture, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.